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ABSTRACT

The traditional role of the personnel administrator is discussed, and the need for a new type of personnel worker who will be held accountable in working with black youth is pointed out. Traditionally, the role of the personnel administrator has been determined and defined by the chief school officer. They have been the officers of law and order in the school, have determined what study "tracks" pupils should follow, have determined what pupils should be taught by certain teachers, have tried to make their decisions appear specific and fair by use of standardized tests and inventories, have selected which students should receive help, have helped in deciding who should be forced to leave school, have decided who should receive counseling, and have proposed which parents should be contacted. If the present school organization is to continue, it is believed that pupil personnel administrators and staff should divorce themselves from the chief school officer or institutions and become independent agencies responsible only to students and parents. This could be done on a contractual basis or in some form of the voucher plan. Students and parents would be responsible for selecting the personnel to act in their behalf. The personnel worker should be representative of the various ethnic groups that comprise the community. Black people must insist upon more personnel directors and staff members who are black. Black people and other minorities must insist upon the major role when the final decision is made regarding budget, school construction, curriculum modifications, and the hiring and firing of all school personnel. (DB)

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ACCOUNTABILITY - TO WHOM, FOR WHAT

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The responsibility of pupil personnel administrators and their staffs cannot be separated from the general concern and criticism of school experience in this country. Personnel administrators claim that the purpose of the services they direct are the same as the program of the total school, and consequently, their staffs exist to advance the aims of education established by the school. This statement indicates that the concern of the school is the same as that of the pupils. Perhaps this is true, but it is also true that the school is representative of concerns other than pupils. In this country, personnel administrators and students are aware of the fact that their destiny is determined by power blocks. There is the power of institutional bureaucracy, professional groups, the legal system, welfare, draft boards, unions, financial aid, politicians, and others which are controlled by the adult world. When students are verbalizing their concerns against the establishment, they claim adults are not listening; that adult words do not agree with their deeds; that little has changed with traditional school routines; that repressive attitudes toward their concerns have increased; and that schools remain more concerned with preparing them for college "training" than how to live in this world of men. Is it realistic to believe that pupil personnel administrators and staff can adequately serve pupil needs when the power block which "tolls their bell" stress school needs?

Traditionally, the role of the personnel administrator has been determined and defined by the chief school officer. The philosophy, values, and attitudes

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of the chief officer is reflected in the services rendered to the school. He employs the kind of personnel director who understands what he wants done. In small units he instructs the school principal likewise. In addition, pupil personnel administrators are hired to relieve the superintendent of most disciplinarian functions whether academic or social. Therefore, the legitimacy of the pupil personnel administrator stems from the direction of the chief school officer. He is directly accountable to this official and indirectly to parents and perhaps pupils.

In order for personnel administrators to facilitate this responsibility, much of their time is spent controlling academic standards, vocational and educational guidance, and the social life of "whole" students. In recent years, much interest has been extended toward able students, and some interest toward juveniles, average, and disadvantaged pupils.

In the true sense of the role function of personnel staffs, they have been the officers of law and order in our school, they have determined what study "tracks" pupils should follow. They have determined what pupils should be taught by certain teachers. They have tried desperately to make their decisions appear scientific and fair through standardized tests and inventories. They have selected which students should receive help. They have helped to decide who should be "kicked-out" of school. They have decided who should experience counseling. And they have proposed which parents should be contacted. These are some of the duties performed by personnel staffs in their attempt to serve the goals of the school influenced by the chief school officer. Consequently, if personnel workers are criticized for being disciplinarians, if they are criticized for serving the chosen few, if they are criticized for practicing too much objectivity with a subjective being, and if they are confused with respect to their role function, the superintendents and principals who shape that role through

their block of power must answer for their share of interference. It is only within this system of the bureaucratic power structure that accountability has practical meaning.

This is where the "buck" starts and stops whether you are measuring the amount of information stored by students over a period of 180 school days, whether you are concerned with measuring the quality and attitudes of personnel staffs, or whether you are measuring the per capita cost of personnel service in relationship to the per capita improvement of the student's surrounding community. In any event, if you are pleased with who "rings your bell," so well and good. If you are unhappy with this parasitic status, what risks are you willing to take in order to answer directly to the clientele you serve rather than through a middleman?

Why is there such a fuss about accountability in education today? I dare say that most school executives are conservatives and extend school practice based upon law and order, Christian ethics, and dominance by the college oriented curriculum. In spite of student protest, most administrations have not changed basic beliefs and practices regarding educational matters. Educators in this wealthy nation have had the opportunity to work in modern facilities and carry out all kinds of programs and experiments, yet the education and concern of all children in this land remain a "white lie."

If the above humanistic elements have not brought forth results for all citizens' children, there is some question in my mind whether the present accountability fad offers much promise. I believe that the major stimulus which gives rise to the subject stems from the pattern and attitudes established many years ago.

The first instance of standing responsible for teaching and learning occurred with the passage of the Massachusetts Bay Law of 1642. The white

Anglo-Saxon Protestants' parents and masters of apprentices were to be fined when the pupils to whom they were responsible did not learn to read and write. About this same time, the educational experiences of Black and Indian children were either ignored or, in some cases, forbidden by law with the threat of fines and/or imprisonment. This meant that "up-south" and "down-north," in this country, the educational pursuits with people of color was not deemed a serious venture. And therefore, the white power "boys" established the precedence that they were responsible for the education of their children, and that educational matters regarding other people's children belonged to them as well.

When educational activities were made operational for the children of Blacks, it was separate and unequal to that of white youth. Black people attacked this proposition through the efforts of the NAACP plus the written words of Kenneth B. Clark's Effect of Prejudice and Discrimination on Personality Development. In 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court declared the separate but equal doctrine in education unconstitutional. Ten years hence the pattern and attitudes set in 1642 regarding educational accountability to white people continued to remain in tact. Thus the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed to plug the holes in the 1954 law. In addition, funds were appropriated by way of the Elementary and Secondary School Act of 1965 to compensate for the continued inequality of educational benefits between white and black children. The pupil personnel people obtained a special "whack" at the problem through the National Education Defense Act. Guidance institutes were established to prepare more and better personnel to assist with the problems of youth. Yet throughout this period, significantly more Black youth continued to be absent from the benefits of schooling, occupations, and advancement in the society. All of these Acts have not solved the problem. Token desegregation continues to reign and whites remain in control for the educational advantage of white youth. The white power

structure has justified skirting the law and the expenditure of millions of dollars for more of the same by conducting famous surveys and reports.

In 1966 James Coleman and "company" was chosen to survey the availability of equal educational opportunity for individuals by reason of race, color, religion, or national origin in public educational institutions at all levels in the United States. The report was published under the title Equality of Educational Opportunity. Can you imagine it required $1.5 million to discover that equal educational opportunity did not exist? that perhaps people were more important than building and math? that the educational dollar is spent in greater amounts in white schools? and that Blacks are bitter about the blunders white folk are making with the education of their children?

This is the picture of accountability in education and in personnel administration designed by, for, of, and to whom--the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant. The current squabble in the bussing of children to gain more desegregation coming from politicians, suburbanites, and some superintendents is by far a reaction to the accountability of white citizens than black ones.

By reason of these circumstances, I am suspicious that the present accountability efforts are a reaction to the failure of de jure and de facto.

I get the feeling that this is a neat game to insure accountability to white citizens that the education of their children is safeguarded, in spite of desegregation, and that the plan will minimize the presence and participation of minority group children, teachers, and personnel workers in the same school. I get the feeling that this campaign of accountability is directed toward a national testing scheme based on white norms, to guarantee a tracking system, and white control with national sanctions. I get the feeling that the ghost of 1642 still haunts the premises of genuine educational services to all children.

Pupil personnel practices and attitudes are not foreign to this pattern. When credit is given for the positive accomplishments of personnel workers, it is common to hear about the students from middle-classed surroundings. Personnel workers have assisted these youth with getting into technical skills training and college bound tracks, staying in school, getting into and directing school social functions, and obtaining scholarship aid among other "goodies."

Perhaps by-gones should be just that if it were not for the fact that racists' customs, attitudes, insincerity, and caste sanction toward minorities and their children continue to be the usual rather than the unusual with school accountability. Although the personnel workers' creed is steeped in glowing humanistic language, it is noticeable that they have been absent from the fight of minorities to gain human dignity for their children in or out of school.

It was students who insisted upon changing some of the status quo. It was the students who demanded their civil rights, who questioned the relevance of their educational experiences, who challenged the impersonal attitudes of professionals, who demanded representation of their kind on committees and boards that influence their well being. Pupil personnel workers have not been viewed as allies on these frontiers. Maybe they work best as the "silent majority" of the establishment. As Richard Hatcher has stated:

> I don't trust the silent majorities. It was members of the silent majority who stood by and watched Kitty Genovese die screaming on that New York street, and never lifted a finger to aid her. Hundreds of years ago when the vocal minority advocated a belief that the earth was round instead of flat, who supported the view of the flat earth? The silent majority! When the vocal minority proposed that the sun, and not the earth, was the center of our solar system, who offered death or imprisonment to those who held this view? The silent majority! When the German Reich systematically murdered six million Jews, what group of German people gave support to their government? The silent majority!

It is also noticeable from the census and growth of suburbs that the inner city school population is becoming increasingly black while proportionately the

superintendents, school principals, personnel administraters and their staffs are becoming increasingly white. Is it reasonable to expect black youth to derive increased educational benefits under this arrangement? If laws, creeds, moral persuasion, and T-groups cannot change white racist attitudes regarding educational accountability, it is no longer tenable for Blacks to keep faith with futility.

Therefore, I strongly support the idea that Black people and other minorities put their energies into the community control of all educational resources which effect the lives of their children. This means they must insist upon the major role when the final decision is made regarding budget, school construction, curriculum modifications, and the hiring and firing of all school personnel. The black community can no longer afford to support the educational establishment which does not work for the best interest of black children as outlined and agreed upon by them. There is no doubt in my mind, the educational crisis of black people was set into motion by the absence of educational accountability and community control; therefore, these two factors must be under their command if the masses of black children are to obtain their just rewards through the established system of education.

Once this notion is in process, attention must be directed toward the development of personnel workers who will be held accountable in working with black youth:

> They need to know about and admit to the racist posture of this country, which has denied humanity to blacks for over three hundred years, and to think about the implications of that fact. They need to know about how the black student perceives himself and his place in America. They need to know about the institution in which they work in terms of the effects of its practices and procedures on black students. But most of all they need to know themselves. They need to know their own prejudices and fears and seek solutions to their own hang-ups, they need to get themselves together first. If they are not willing to do these things, then they have no business guiding black students. While this applies primarily to whites, it also applies to some "Negroes."

> "To most black students a white personnel worker already has one strike against him because of the students' previous experience with whites and the history of race relations in general. If this worker is too "up-tight" to meet the student in an open, ganeless and congruent manner, then he will be ineffective."
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> . . . Condescension, sympathy, and denial reactions are the feelings that the white personnel worker is most likely to have about the plight of black people in this country; he can never understand or feel what it means to be black in a racist society. If, however, the white personnel worker is able to achieve some of these conditions to a minimal degree, then he may be able to relate minimally to black students; but the black students' lack of faith in the white personnel worker's willingness or ability to help him solve his problems tend to make the white personnel worker totally ineffective.
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> The problem of the black personnel worker who has not examined himself is that he has a tendency to project his attitudes and feelings on other blacks. He can be just as "up-tight" as the white personnel worker and just as ineffective if the black student sees him for what he really is. An added problem for a black personnel worker working in a white institution is that he must demonstrate his ligitimacy to black students who need to feel that he is someone who is honestly interested in them and not an "Uncle Tom" or a qualified showpiece.**

We need personnel workers who can do more than administer white biased tests. They need to be aware of tests biased in favor of black youth with all items taken from the culture of Blacks such as the "Black Intelligence Test Counterbalanced for Honkies." This instrument is being developed by Dr. Robert Williams, Washington University. We need workers with imagination and the will to take a firm stand to liberate black youth from the shackles of educational oppression, as they have done and continue to do for most white students.

Interestingly, another kind of worker has recently come upon the scene under the name para-professional. The idea is that these persons from the local community make more effective personal contacts with students and parents than the professionals. These workers can do better what professionals felt they had monopolized. This suggests that perhaps more flexible career ladders need to be built into the education scheme so that these sensitive workers can take the place of the insensitive ones. But more than this, if our investment in pupil personnel administrators is to continue, in view of the changes taking place in

our society, there must be some alterations made in their purposes, attitudes and activities, if they are to serve students rather than the educational establishment.

To begin with, the unrest which complicates life in the society is likely to continue, and the unrest related to student life is likely to continue. Pupil personnel workers, because of their powerless status, can only lend partial assistance to students as they attempt to find solutions to matters they deem important. If the present school organization is to continue, I think the pupil personnel administrators and staff should divorce themselves from the chief school officer or institutions and become independent agencies responsible only to students and parents. This could be done on a contractual basis or some form of the "voucher plan." Students and parents would be responsible for selecting the personnel to act in their behalf. They would receive all reports with regard to admission, discipline, placement, human relations, counseling and the entire array of social activities in which students and parents have vested interest.

Those personnel administrators who remain as arms of the chief school officer would serve to coordinate and preserve the position of the administration as they presently do. In matters of dispute and arbitration there would be a balance with one set of workers fighting for the interest of parents and students and the other one for the administration of the system. This arrangement provides personnel workers with the means to be entirely accountable to the population they are intended to serve, and would eliminate conflict of interest with their present boss. In either case the personnel worker should be representative of the various ethnic groups that comprise the community.

In summary, I have suggested that accountability with respect to pupil personnel administration and staff suffers from the same ills as American education

in general. There has always been accountability where the education of white children is involved. The children of minorities obtain the least benefits from the educational system and little, if any, accountability from school authorities. Therefore, the most important business with which minorities should be concerned in the educational development of their children is community control and participation.

Until such condition is a reality, Blacks must insist upon something more than a "token Negro," chosen by whites to sanction decisions fostering white concerns while ignoring those of Blacks. They must insist upon more personnel directors and staff members who are black and demonstrate that they are for "real" when it comes to working with our children. If para-professional from the local community prove to be the best resource for our children to be treated like humans in their development, so be it.

Finally, pupil personnel administrators and staff must withdraw from the administration of chief school officers and become independent agents accountable to parents and pupils. I do not believe that the concept of accountability will become a significant force in the education of all children in the United States until the factors noted are put into the established educational system.

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